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*The Home of Balaam.*\*—By W. F. ALBRIGHT, Johns Hopkins University.

In 1850 Joseph Dérenbourg, in his *Fables de Loqmân le Sage*, following the suggestion of Ewald and Rödiger, identified the pre-Islamic prophet, Loqmân, mentioned in the thirty-first sura of the Qurân, with Balaam.<sup>1</sup> Loqmân seems to be a translation of Balaam, as both Heb. *balâ'* and Arab. *lâqama* mean *to swallow*. Translations of proper names from Hebrew into Arabic are not infrequent; *e. g.* the modern *Tell el-Qâdî* represents the ancient *Dan*. In the same way, the modern name of Megiddo, which means *garrison*, is *Lejjun* = Lat. *legio*.<sup>2</sup> The Mohammedan commentators say that Loqmân belonged to the tribe of 'Ad, and lived at Elath in Midian. Other reports concerning him, *e. g.*, that he was a Nubian freedman, and was born in the tenth year of David's reign,<sup>3</sup> are late inventions.

Nineteen years later Nöldeke<sup>4</sup> came to the conclusion that Balaam ben-Be'or was ultimately identical with Bela' ben-Be'or, recorded as the first king of Edom in the archaic list Gen. 36. Both of these combinations are accepted by Eduard Meyer.<sup>5</sup>

It has been reserved for Professor Haupt, however, in his monograph on *Midian und Sinai*,<sup>6</sup> to set the personality of Balaam in a clearer light. Both Midian and 'Ad seem to denote the Sinaitic Amphictyony, *i. e.* the religious confederation of worshipers of Yahweh, which sprang up around the North-Arabian Sinai in the 13. cent. B. C.<sup>7</sup> From this region came

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\* This article and the two following were first put in type by the printers of this Journal in the summer of 1915. See the Note on page 319.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ency. Brit.*, s. v. *Luqman*, and IN\* 378.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Haupt, MuS in ZDMG 63, 506, l. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Mas'ûdî 1, 110 (*Les prairies d'or*, Paris, 1861).

<sup>4</sup> Nöldeke, *Untersuchungen zur Kritik des AT* (1869) p. 87.

<sup>5</sup> IN 376—380.

<sup>6</sup> ZDMG 63, 506—530.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Haupt, *Armageddon*, JAOS 34, 412 ff., n. 12.

the Edomites, and their offshoot, the Jews. The evil reputation of the Midianites of the south, reflected in the OT, is due to northern, Israelitish, memories of the raids which preceded their final settlement in southern Palestine.

The Israelites themselves had entered northern Palestine during the great Khabir-Hebrew migration, some two centuries before. At that time they were idolaters; they were forced by David, about 1000, to embrace Judaism, but after the disruption of the kingdom, c. 930, they relapsed again into idolatry. The Angel of Yahweh, who blocked the way of Balaam,<sup>1</sup> was an ancient Israelitish deity. Subsequent editors have often substituted *Angel of Yahweh* for the names of ancient heathen gods, because, according to the early Judaic conception, foreign gods were angels commissioned by Yahweh to govern the foreign nations.<sup>2</sup>

All scholars agree that we have in the legend of Balaam the remnants of at least two separate stories, reflecting the northern (Ephraimitic) tradition, and the southern (Judaic) version. The northern tradition has, of course, been much modified by Judaic editors. For instance, *Moabites* has been inserted in the place of *Edomites*. The reference to the Amorites at the beginning of Num. 22 seems to be an editorial link, connecting the episode of Balaam with the account of the fight against the Amorites.

Balaam was an ancient Edomite sage. The reading *Aram* in Num. 23, 7 is simply a corruption of *Edom*, a confusion which is common in the OT. The Koranic *Iramu*, or *Aramu*, which, according to the commentators, was situated south-east of Elath, apparently owes its existence to the same misunderstanding. The two passages in Num. 22, 5, and Deut. 23, 5, where the alleged Aramean home of Balaam is more definitely located at Pethor, represent late glosses.

This localization may perhaps be due to a popular etymology of Pethor, connecting it with Heb. פִּתְרוֹן, *interpretation of dreams*,<sup>3</sup> which exhibits a ת in Hebrew, while in Assyrian and Aramaic we have a ש (pašāru, פִּשַׁר). Instead of the place-name ש gives in Num. 22, 5 פִּשְׁרָא, *hariolus*, whereas in Deut.

<sup>1</sup> It may be interesting to note in this connection that Arab. *lāqama* has also the meaning to block the way.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Haupt, *Armageddon*, n. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Haupt, *Proverbs* (SBOT), p. 51, l. 14.

23, 5 פִּתּוֹר has פִּתּוֹר. In the latter passage פִּתּוֹר omits the name altogether. So it would seem that in Deut. 23, 5 the פִּתּוֹר of the Hebrew is a post-Septuagintal gloss, based upon the passage in Num. In connection with פִּשּׁוּרָא, it may be noted that the Arabic translation from פִּתּוֹר published by Lagarde,<sup>1</sup> expands to العَرَفُ المَعْبَرُ للأحلام, the *diviner, the interpreter of dreams*.

פִּתּוֹר has long been identified with the Assyrian *Pitr*. If this be correct, we should vocalize פִּתּוֹר,<sup>2</sup> the ו being due simply to dittography of the ר as is so often the case.<sup>3</sup> This disposes of the objections which are frequently raised to this view.<sup>4</sup> The dittography of the ר may have been favored by the presence of the ו in צִפּוֹר and בְּעוֹר immediately before.

*Pitr* is mentioned by Shalmaneser III (860—825),<sup>5</sup> who informs us that it was situated at the confluence of the Euphrates and the Sâjûr, in the district of *Bît-Adin*. Tho its site has not yet been examined, *Pitr* seems to have been a place of some antiquity. Shalmaneser states that it had been conquered by the Arameans in the reign of Ašûr-irbi (c. 1000). On the great list of Thutmosis III (c. 1500) No. 280, *Pdrw*, is doubtless *Pitr*.<sup>6</sup>

*Bît-Adin* is, of course, the Hebrew בֵּית-עֵדֶן.<sup>7</sup> The district seems to be mentioned again by Tiglathpileser IV (746—727)<sup>8</sup> and, still later, Ezekiel mentions it as עֵדֶן, which corresponds to the 'tn of the Egyptian monuments.<sup>9</sup> Thanks to the data furnished by the Assyrians, its geography is relatively well-known.<sup>10</sup>

The site of Til-Barsip, the capital of Beth-Eden, was discovered by Campbell-Thompson in 1911 at the mound of *Tell el-Aḥmar*, on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, almost

<sup>1</sup> Lagarde, *Materialien zur Kritik und Geschichte des Pentateuchs* (Leipzig, 1867) I, 171.

<sup>2</sup> MuS 515, n. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Haupt, JBL 32, p. 161, n. 4, and p. 165.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Gressmann, *Mose und seine Zeit* (Göttingen, 1913) p. 320, n. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Obelisk 1, 38 ff. (KB 1, 133).

<sup>6</sup> Max Müller, AE p. 267.

<sup>7</sup> בֵּית-עֵדֶן means *House of Delight*, characterizing the beauty of the country. The same name is applied to the *ager Damascenus*; see Haupt, OLZ 10, 306.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Schiffer, *Keilinschriftliche Spuren* (Beiheft zu OLZ 10) p. 27.

<sup>9</sup> AE 281, 291.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Delitzsch, BA 6, 1, 22, and Schiffer, *op. cit.* p. 26.

directly opposite the mouth of the Sâjûr. The identification of the site is rendered certain by an inscription of Shalmaneser's discovered there.<sup>1</sup>

If we bear in mind that the cuneiform equivalent of פתור, or rather, פֶּתֶר, was situated in the district of בֵּית-עֶדֶן, the *crux* at the conclusion of the gloss in Num. 22. 5 becomes clear. Instead of פתורה אשר על הנהר ארץ בני-עמו = *to Pethor, which is on the river of (?) the land of the children of his people*, we must evidently read, פֶּתֶרָה אֲשֶׁר עַל הַנְּהַר בְּאַרְץ בְּנֵי-עֶדֶן = *to Pitr, which is on the Euphrates, in the land of Beth-Eden*. The only change of any consequence is the substitution of a פ for the כ, and in the cursive script which we find on the papyri of the 5. cent. B. C. these letters are often much alike.<sup>2</sup>

The Hebrew idiom for *inhabitants of Beth-Eden* is not בְּנֵי בֵּית עֶדֶן, but simply בְּנֵי עֶדֶן. Similarly, Assyrian *mâr Agusi* is equivalent to *ša bît Agusi*.<sup>3</sup>

It is true that פֶּתֶר בְּנֵי עֶדֶן read here בְּנֵי עֶמּוֹן and that this reading has been adopted by the majority of expositors. If this were correct, we should have a fifth home of Balaam, representing a fifth theory, according to which he was not an Edomite, or a Midianite, or an Amorite, or an Aramean, but an Ammonite. However, the term הַנְּהַר cannot be applied to one of the insignificant wadies of Ammon. The reading עֶמּוֹן is obviously a conjectural emendation, on the part of the translators, of the unintelligible עֶמּוֹ.

Our gloss may date from the 5. cent., or may even be later. The fragments of the *Romance of Akhîqar*, found at Elephantine, bear witness to the respect entertained for Mesopotamian sages by the Jews of the 5. century.<sup>4</sup> In passing, it is interesting to observe the striking resemblance between the magical rites ascribed to Balaam and Mesopotamian practises, as has been pointed out by Daiches.<sup>5</sup>

As stated above, Balaam was an ancient Edomite sage, and the Israelites whom he was called upon to curse were idolaters.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. PSBA 34, 66 (1912). For sketch-map see PSBA 33, facing p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gesenius-Kautzsch<sup>28</sup>, *Schrifttafel*, col. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Ungnad, OZ 9, 224.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Sachau, *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus Elephantine*, pp. xxi ff. Cf. also Halévy, *Revue Sémitique* 20, 153 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Assyriologische Studien H. V. Hilprecht gewidmet* (Leipzig, 1909) pp. 60 ff.

In the same way, as Professor Haupt has shown, the Israelitish hero, Gideon,<sup>1</sup> was an idolater, whereas the Midianites whom he defeated were worshipers of Yahweh. The present form of the old Israelitish traditions, which we find in the OT, has been worked over by Judaic editors, just as the traditions of South Arabia were conformed to Mohammedan standards.

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<sup>1</sup> Circa 1100 B. C.; see IN 381.

\* Note the following abbreviations: AE = Max Müller, *Asien und Europa*; AJSL = *American Journal of Semitic Languages*; BA = *Beiträge zur Assyriologie*; IN = E. Meyer, *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme*; JAOS = *Journal of the American Oriental Society*; JBL = *Journal of Biblical Literature*; KB = *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*; MuS = *Midian und Sinai*; PSBA = *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*; SBOT = *Sacred Books of the Old Testament*; ZDMG = *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*.